



VEITCH • GUICHET • PROPST

AQUAMAN

NO. 3
APR '03

THE RISING!




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"HAIL, MERA, SUPREME
SOUL OF THE SEVEN SEAS."



"RADIANT AND ANOINTED
ARCHITECT OF THE NEW
ATLANTIS!"




"BENEVOLENT
AND OMNISCIANT
OVERSEER OF
THE OCEAN'S
CHOSEN PEOPLE."



YOUR HUMBLE
SERVANT, RODDNEY,
BRINGS IGNOBLE
TIDINGS.

THE
MONGREL DOGFISH,
ORIN, HAS SURVIVED
TRIAL BY DESICCATION
ON TRAITOR'S REEF.



ARE YOU TELLING HER MAJESTY THAT YOU HAVE FAILED TO EXECUTE HER WILL, RODUNN?

AQUAMANER!

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BUT HE HAS FOUND SUCCOR UPON THE LAND, WALKING LIKE AN APE AMONG HIS ACCURSED LUNG-COUSINS.

AND YOU THINK WE DID NOT KNOW AS MUCH?

OUR ADEPTS SUSPECT HE HAS ALLIED WITH A NEW AND MYSTERIOUS FORCE, ONE THAT MAY PRESENT A GRAVE CHALLENGE TO THE IMPERIAL THRONE.



I FEAR SO, HAGEN. OUR SORCERERS HAVE BARRED YELLOWHAIR FROM THE LIFE-GIVING SEA BY TURNING THE FISH AGAINST HIM.

I WILL GO AMONG THE SURFACE DWELLERS AND KILL ORIN MYSELF! ONLY THEN WILL I BE FIT TO REGAIN MY PLACE AS CAPTAIN OF THE QUEEN'S GUARD!

YOUR EMPRESS ACKNOWLEDGES YOUR LONG YEARS OF DEDICATION TO THE CROWN.

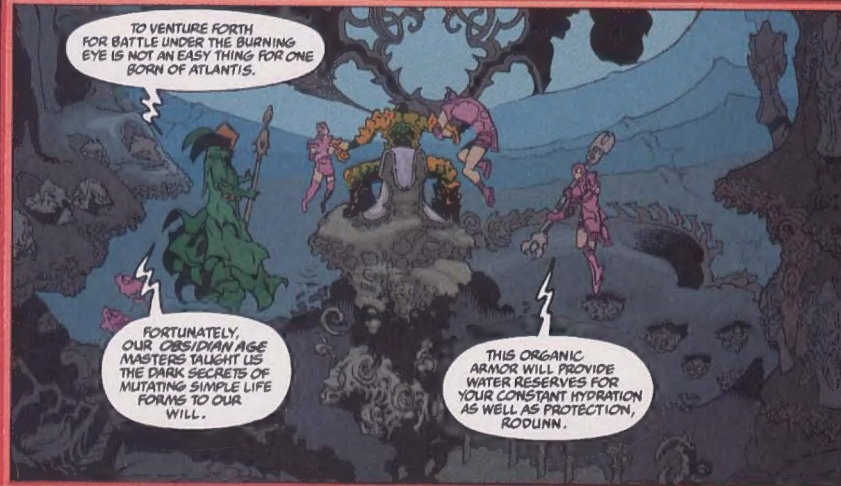
HER RADIANCE WONDERS IF PERHAPS ORIN STILL HOLDS SWAY OVER YOU, RODURM. AFTER ALL, YOU WERE ONCE SWORN TO PROTECT HIM WITH YOUR LIFE.

NAY! I HATE HIM! I BEG MY EMPRESS-- LET ME ATONE FOR THIS BLOT I HAVE PUT UPON HER HONOR!

SHE GRACIOUSLY PROVIDES THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PROVE YOURSELF FREE OF ANY LINGERING FEALTY TO HER PREDECESSOR.

COME...






TO VENTURE FORTH
FOR BATTLE UNDER THE BURNING
EYE IS NOT AN EASY THING FOR ONE
BORN OF ATLANTIS.

FORTUNATELY,
OUR OBSIDIAN AGE
MASTERS TAUGHT US
THE DARK SECRETS OF
MUTATING SIMPLE LIFE
FORMS TO OUR
WILL.

THIS ORGANIC
ARMOR WILL PROVIDE
WATER RESERVES FOR
YOUR CONSTANT HYDRATION
AS WELL AS PROTECTION,
RODUNN.



I CAN'T WAIT TO GIVE
YELLOWHAIR A LOVE TAP
WITH THIS!


IT IS THE
MOST POWERFUL
SHOCK LANCE IN
THE ROYAL ARMORY.
THEY SAY IT WILL
STUN A SPERM
WHALE!

BUT A
KNIGHT OF THE
REALM IS ONLY
AS GOOD AS
HIS CHARGER,
RODUNN!

SO WE HAVE BRED YOU
A STEED THAT WILL MAKE
YOUR ENEMY'S BLOOD
RUN COLD.

BEFORE IT
FEASTS ON IT,
THAT IS.

HAA! THE LOWLY
BLOODSUCKING SEA LAMPREY
BECOMES THE AVENGING
SPIRIT OF NEW ATLANTIS!



REDEEM YOURSELF,
RODUNN! GO TO THE
SURFACE, FIND AND
END THIS THREAT TO
IMPERIAL RULE!

I RIDE
FOR THE
GREATER
GLORY
OF OUR
QUEEN.

LET THE
TRAITOR, ORIN,
PONDER AND FEAR
THE STRONG MAILED
FIST OF THE NEW
ATLANTIS!

MIZEN HEAD,
WESTERN IRELAND.

THE TELEPATHIC
CONNECTION TO
MY NEW HAND IS
DEEPENING.

YESTERDAY, I
SAW A VISION
UNFOLD WITHIN
ITS WATERY FORM.

BY MANIPULATING ITS
MOLECULAR STRUCTURE
WITH MY THOUGHTS, I
CAN EASILY INCREASE
ITS SURFACE TENSION.

I BET I COULD
MAKE IT AS
SOLID AS STEEL
IF I TRIED.



DON'T GO
DRINKIN' THAT TAP
WATER, CURRY! NOT
UNLESS YOU WANT
A BAD CASE OF THE
BELLY GRIPES.

WHY'S THAT,
McCAFFREY?
IS YOUR WELL
POLLUTED?

NAH, JUST SALTY. AIN'T
NO FRESH GROUNDWATER
THIS FAR OUT ON THE POINT.
WE LUG IN BOTTLES
FER DRINKIN'.

NOT THAT I
HAVE MUCH USE
FER THE STUFF
MYSELF.
Y'UNDERSTAND.

SO THE PLUMBING
JUST PIPES IN DIRECT
FROM THE SEA?

YEP HEAT IT ON
THE WOODSTOVE. USE
IT FER BATHIN' AND
DOIN' DISHES.

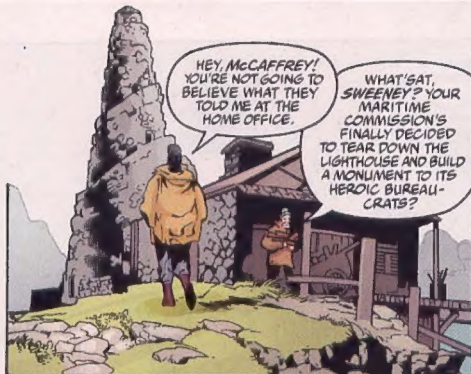
AND FLUSHIN' THE
POETS THRONE. ALL
THE COMFORTS OF
HOME OUT HERE ON
MIZEN HEAD!

THEN, I
COULD JUST TAKE
A SALT WATER
SHOWER HERE?
ANYTIME I
WANT?

SURE! AS LONG
AS Y'CHOP THE WOOD
AND KEEP THE STOVE
FIRED.

SO MAYBE YE'LL
BE STAYIN' ON T'HELP
ME RUN THINGS?

YES,
I THINK I
WILL.



HEY, MCCAFFREY!
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO
BELIEVE WHAT THEY
TOLD ME AT THE
HOME OFFICE.

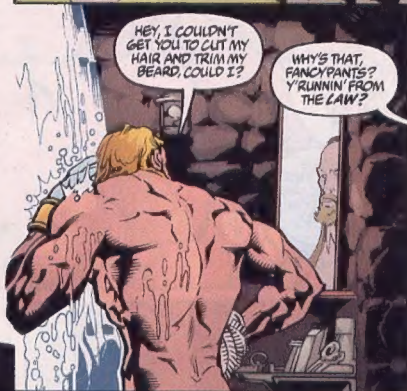
WHAT'S SAT,
SWEENEY? YOUR
MARITIME
COMMISSION'S
FINALLY DECIDED
TO TEAR DOWN THE
LIGHTHOUSE AND BUILD
A MONUMENT TO ITS
HEROIC BUREAU-
CRATS?

NOPE! THEY'RE GIVIN'
YOU ALL CREDIT FOR
SAVING THE ABERDEEN
CASTLE FROM GOIN' TO
GROUND IN THAT STORM
YESTERDAY.

THEY WANT TO
FIX UP THE LIGHT AND
KEEP IT OPERATING.
MIZEN HEAD'S GONNA
LOOK SHARP AGAIN.



SWEENEY?
IS THAT YOU?



HEY, I COULDN'T
GET YOU TO CUT MY
HAIR AND TRIM MY
BEARD, COULD I?

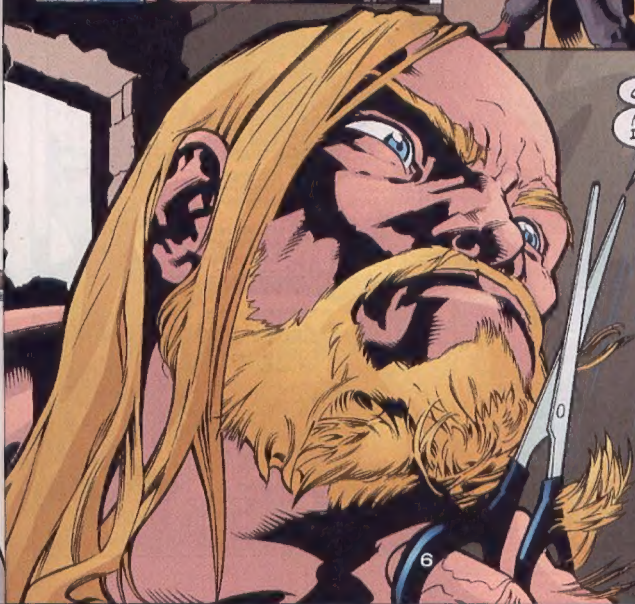
WHY'S THAT,
FANCYPANTS?
Y'RUNNIN' FROM
THE LAW?



NO, NO.
IT'S JUST... TIME
FOR A CHANGE,
I GUESS.

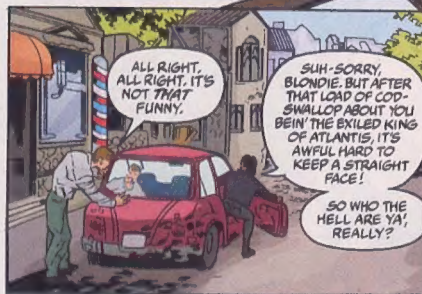
WHO
DO YOU THINK I
AM, YER FAFFIN'
GIRLFRIEND?

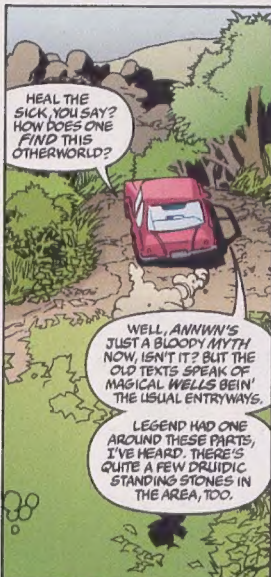
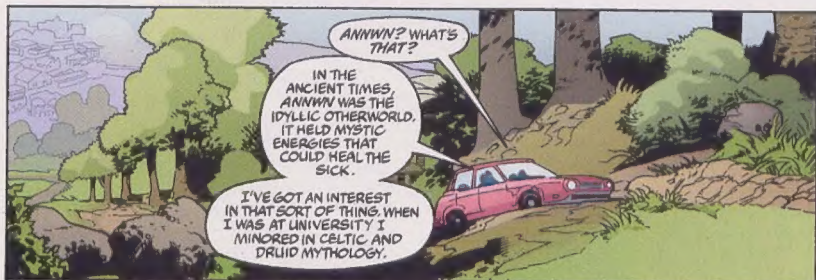
CUT YER
OWN DAMN
HAIR!




OH-H-KAY.

MAYBE
I WILL.







WHATEVER GLOWED ONTO THAT POOR DEVIL ISN'T PART OF THE NATURAL WORLD.

PERHAPS IF I CAN STIMULATE ANOTHER VISION, I'LL GET AN IDEA WHAT I'M UP AGAINST.

OKAY. THOUGHTS POISED. ARCH. DIVE IN.


(SHIFTING. SWIRLING. FORMING...)

(SEEING.)

STANDING STONES. JUST LIKE SWEENEY MENTIONED.

THE ANCIENT CELTS USED THEM IN THEIR RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES. RAISED THEM IN A CIRCLE...

SOMETIMES AROUND A WELL.



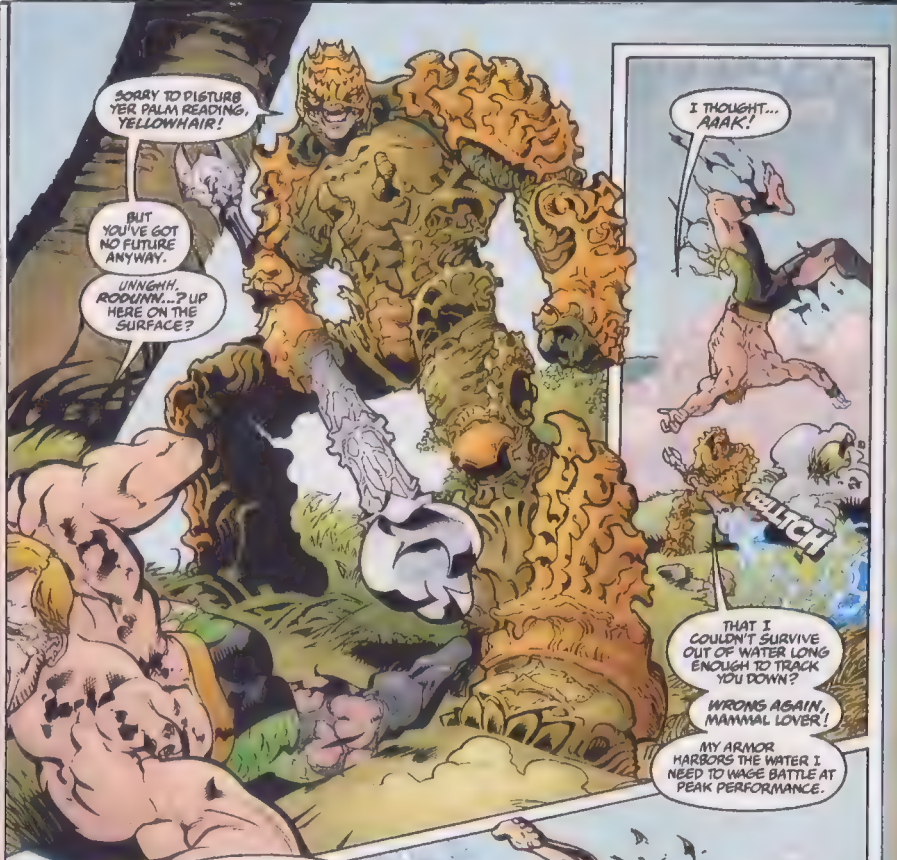
INTERESTING, BUT SO FAR, NO SIGN OF ANY THREATENING...

ARTHUR--
LOOK OUT!



AAAAAAGH!

BZZZZT!



SORRY TO DISTURB
YER PALM READING,
YELLOWHAIR!

BUT
YOU'VE GOT
NO FUTURE
ANYWAY.

UNNGHH,
RODUNN...? UP
HERE ON THE
SURFACE?

I THOUGHT...
AAAK!

THAT I
COULDN'T SURVIVE
OUT OF WATER LONG
ENOUGH TO TRACK
YOU DOWN?

WRONG AGAIN,
MAMMAL LOVER!

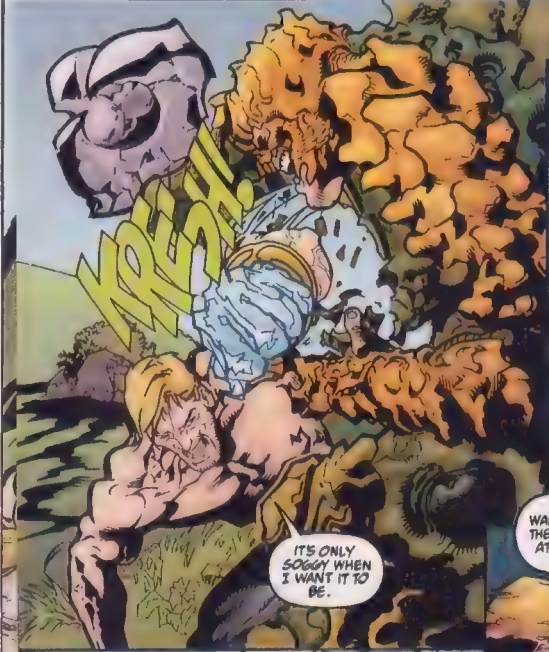
MY ARMOR
HARBORS THE WATER I
NEED TO WAGE BATTLE AT
PEAK PERFORMANCE.

WHAT WERE ONCE
TINY SEA HORSES FLUTTING
ABOUT THE OCEAN FLOOR
HAVE BEEN FINESSED TO
SERVE THE GOALS OF
ATLANTIS! WHILE
YOU...?

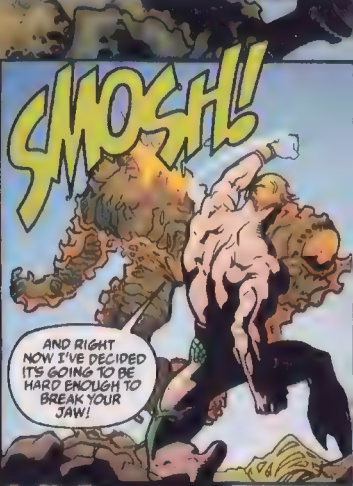
BWULTCH

YOU'VE
NOTHING TO FIGHT
BACK WITH BUT THAT
SOGGY WATER BAL-
LOON OF A HAND!

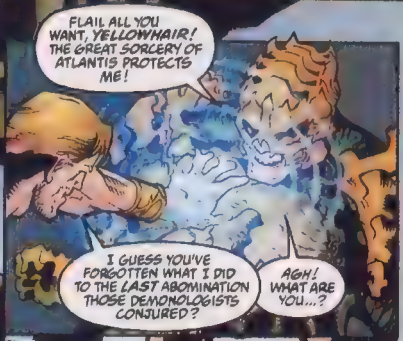
F-FUNNY THING
ABOUT THE HAND,
RODUNN.



IT'S ONLY SOGGY WHEN I WANT IT TO BE.



AND RIGHT NOW I'VE DECIDED IT'S GOING TO BE HARD ENOUGH TO BREAK YOUR JAW!



FLAIL ALL YOU WANT, YELLOWHAIR! THE GREAT SORCERY OF ATLANTIS PROTECTS ME!

I GUESS YOU'VE FORGOTTEN WHAT I DID TO THE LAST ABOMINATION THOSE DEMONOLOGISTS CONJURED?

AGH! WHAT ARE YOU...?



TH-THE ARMOR-I-IT'S GETTING TIGHTER, SH-SHRINKING ON ME.

AAGHH! DAMN YOU, YELLOWHAIR! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

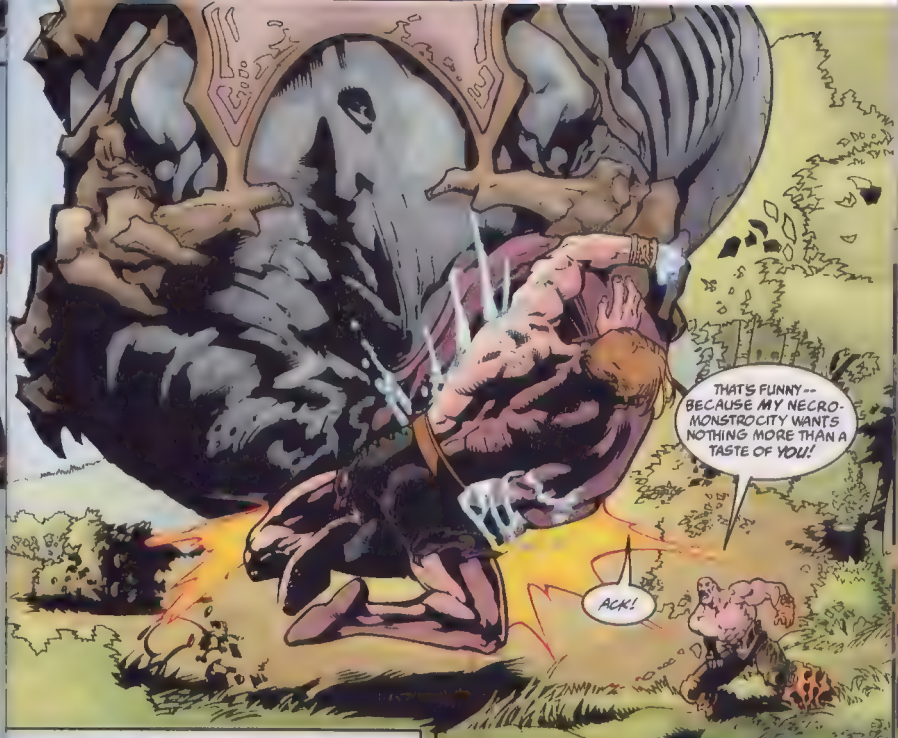
IT'S WHAT I'M UNDOING, ROPUNN.



AAH! AAK!

I STAND AGAINST CYNICAL WITCHERY THAT TURNS THE WONDERS OF NATURE INTO NECRO-MONSTROSITIES!

SUCH SACRILEGE LEAVES A BAD TASTE IN MY MOUTH!



THAT'S FUNNY--
BECAUSE MY NECRO-
MONSTROCITY WANTS
NOTHING MORE THAN A
TASTE OF YOU!

ACK!

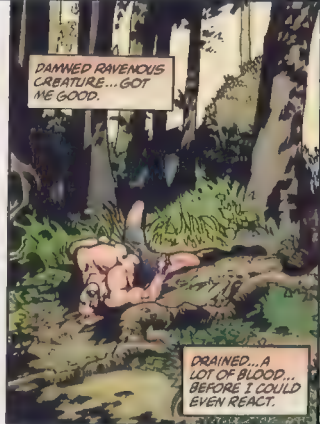


THIS PARTICULAR
SPECIES OF LAMPREY
USED TO FEED ON FAST-
MOVING POISONOUS
FISH.

IT WON'T GIVE
YOU TIME TO EVEN
THINK ABOUT EMPLOY-
ING YOUR DEFENSES
BEFORE IT'S GOT ITS
FANGS IN YOU.

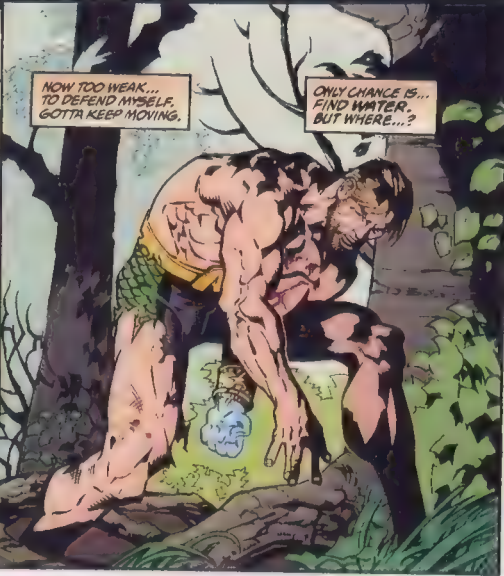


AND DRUNK ITS
FILL!



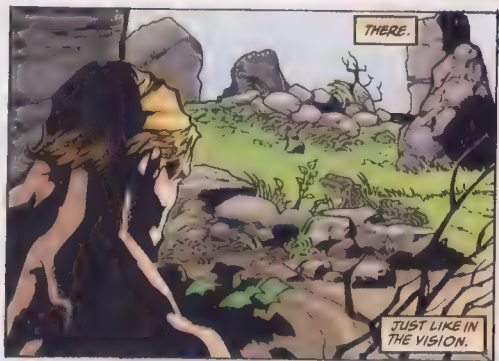
DAMNED RAVENOUS
CREATURE... GOT
ME GOOD.

DRAINED... A
LOT OF BLOOD...
BEFORE I COULD
EVEN REACT.



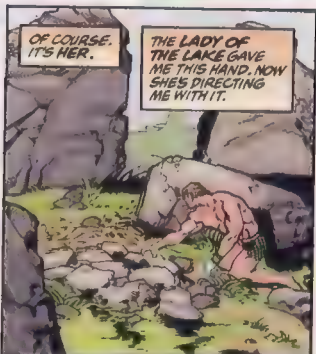
NOW TOO WEAK...
TO DEFEND MYSELF.
GOTTA KEEP MOVING.

ONLY CHANCE IS...
FIND WATER.
BUT WHERE...?



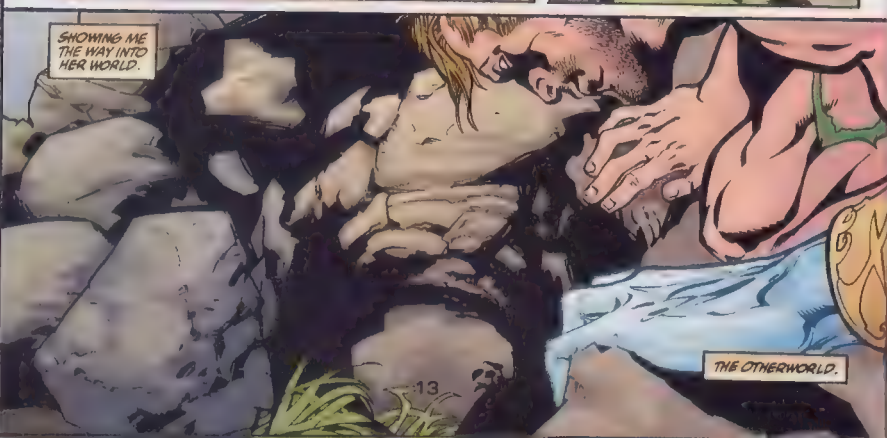
THERE.

JUST LIKE IN
THE VISION.



OF COURSE.
IT'S HER.

THE LADY OF
THE LAKE GAVE
ME THIS HAND. NOW
SHE'S DIRECTING
ME WITH IT.



SHOWING ME
THE WAY INTO
HER WORLD.

THE OTHERWORLD.

THE COLD MOSSY BLACKNESS
OF THE ANCIENT WELLHEAD
SWALLOWS ME WHOLE.

ITS ENVELOPING WATER,
PURE AND MERCURIAL,
IS A BLESSED SALVE ON
MY WOUNDS.

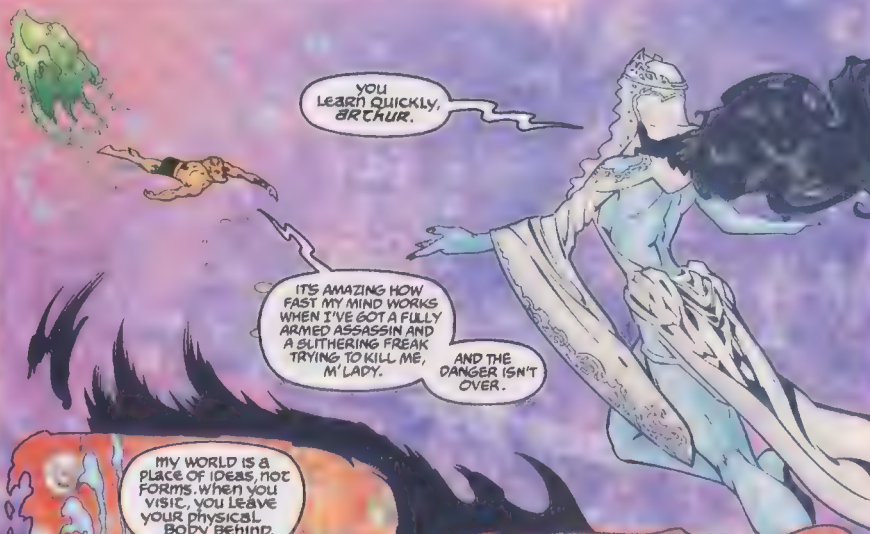


BUT IF I'M RIGHT,
THIS WELL IS MUCH
MORE THAN A SHAFT
SUNK DEEP IN THE
EARTH.

IT'S A PORTAL INTO
A PLACE THE ANCIENT
PEOPLE WHO LIVED
HERE KNEW AS
ANNWN.

A PLACE I CALL
THE SECRET SEA.






you
learn quickly,
Br'Chur.

IT'S AMAZING HOW
FAST MY MIND WORKS
WHEN I'VE GOT A FULLY
ARMED ASSASSIN AND
A SLITHERING FREAK
TRYING TO KILL ME,
M'LADY.


AND THE
DANGER ISN'T
OVER.



MY WORLD IS A
PLACE OF IDEAS, NOT
FORMS. WHEN YOU
VISIT, YOU LEAVE
YOUR PHYSICAL
BODY BEHIND.

THAT WELL WATER
WAS HELPING TO
RESTORE ME, BUT
I'M PRETTY BUSTED
UP AND VULNERABLE
BACK THERE.

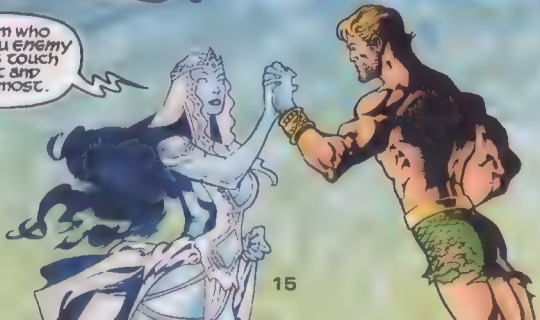
IS THERE
ANYTHING YOU
CAN DO TO HELP
ME DEFEAT MY
ATTACKER?



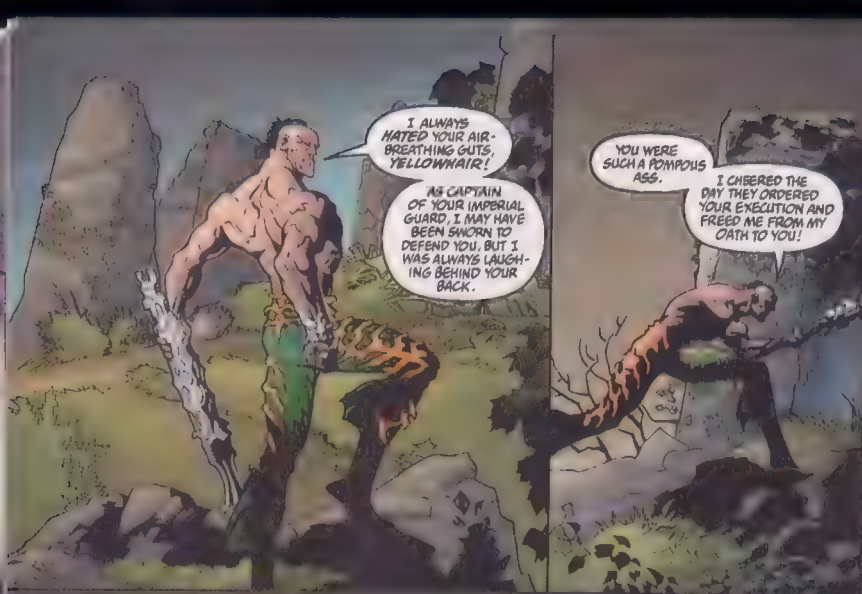
HEARTS FILLED WITH
ANGER DEFEAT THEMSELVES.
WATERBEARER.

YOUR HAND IS
A GIFT; ONE THAT
MUST NEVER BE RAISED
AS A WEAPON.

IT IS ONE WITH
MY OWN. THROUGH IT
THE HEALING OF THE
WORLD BEGINS.



LET HIM WHO
CALLS YOU ENEMY
FEEL ITS TOUCH
FIRST AND
FOREMOST.

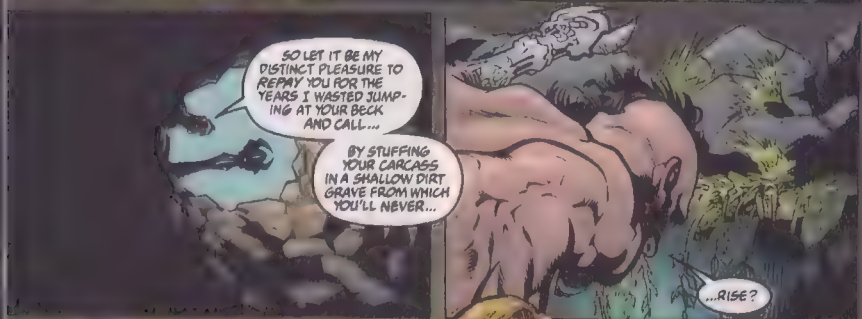


I ALWAYS
HATED YOUR AIR-
BREATHING GUTS,
YELLOWHAIR!

AS CAPTAIN
OF YOUR IMPERIAL
GUARD, I MAY HAVE
BEEN SWORN TO
DEFEND YOU, BUT I
WAS ALWAYS LAUGH-
ING BEHIND YOUR
BACK.

YOU WERE
SUCH A POMPUS
ASS.

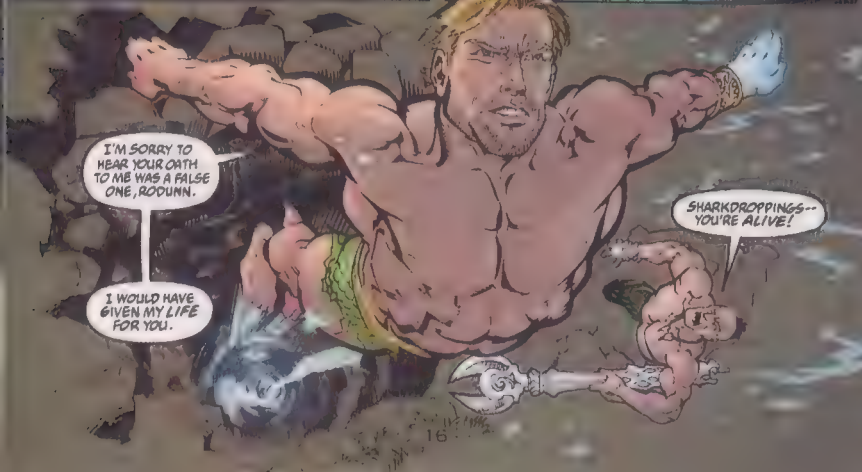
I CHEERED THE
DAY THEY ORDERED
YOUR EXECUTION AND
FREED ME FROM MY
OATH TO YOU!



SO LET IT BE MY
DISTINCT PLEASURE TO
REPAY YOU FOR THE
YEARS I WASTED JUMP-
ING AT YOUR BECK
AND CALL...

BY STUFFING
YOUR CARCASS
IN A SHALLOW DIRT
GRAVE FROM WHICH
YOU'LL NEVER...

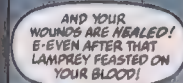
...RISE?



I'M SORRY TO
HEAR YOUR OATH
TO ME WAS A FALSE
ONE, RODUNN.

I WOULD HAVE
GIVEN MY LIFE
FOR YOU.

SHARKDROPPINGS--
YOU'RE ALIVE!



AND YOUR
WOUNDS ARE HEALED!
E-EVEN AFTER THAT
LAMPREY FEASTED ON
YOUR BLOOD!

RODINN--
WAIT. BEHIND
YOU...

SOMETHIN'
AIN'T RIGHT
HERE!

YOU'RE IN
LEAGUE WITH SOME
KIND OF DEVILS! I
KNOW IT, I...

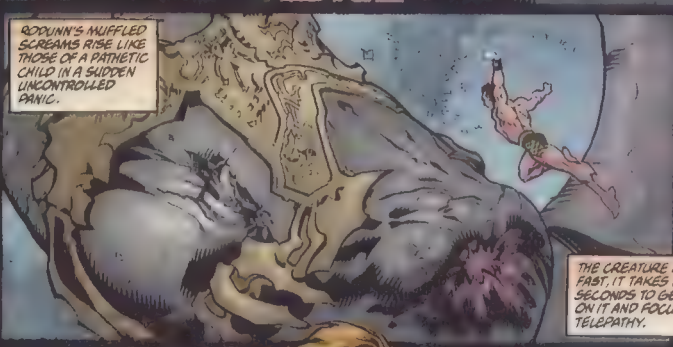
LOOK
OUT!



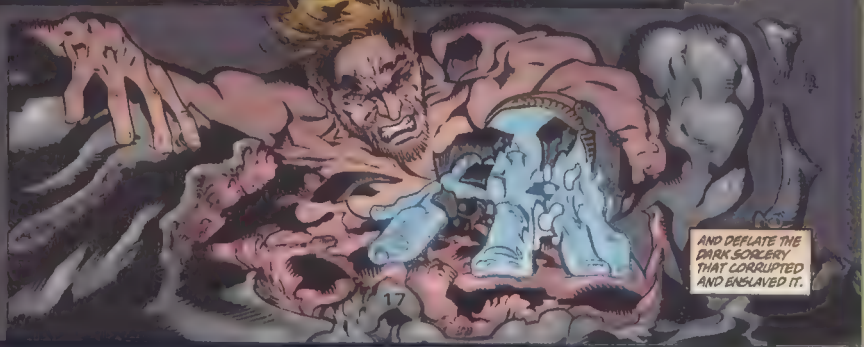
NAAAAOOWWWWWFFF!

RODINN!
HANG ON--I'M
COMING!

RODINN'S MUFFLED
SCREAMS RISE LIKE
THOSE OF A PATHETIC
CHILD IN A SUDDEN
UNCONTROLLED
PANIC.



THE CREATURE MOVES SO
FAST, IT TAKES PRECIOUS
SECONDS TO GET MY HAND
ON IT AND FOCUS MY
TELEPATHY.



AND DEFLATE THE
DARK SOBRIETY
THAT CORRUPTED
AND ENSLAVED IT.

IF ONLY HELPING
MY OLD CAPTAIN
OF THE GUARD
COULD BE SO
SIMPLE.

RODUNN, YOU
KNOW I ALWAYS
TRUSTED YOU.

WHAT
POSSESSED
YOU TO TURN
SO VIOLENTLY
AGAINST
ME?

I'M SORRY...
GASSP... SO
SORRY...

IN TRUTH IT
WAS NO MYSTIC
SPELL... GASSP...
NOR EVEN ANGER
AT HOW YOU SANK
ATLANTIS.

THE CULPRIT
WAS THE FETID
STEW... GASSP...
THAT HAS ALWAYS
STEEPED IN THE
CAULDRON OF
RODUNN'S OWN
BLACK HEART.

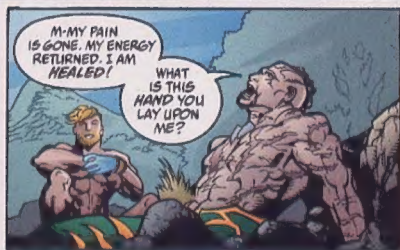
LET ME END IT...
UP HERE...
WHEEZING ON
THIN AIR LIKE
A FISH ON
THE SAND.

I-I DON'T EVEN
DESERVE THE HONOR...
GASSSSPP... OF AN
ATLANTIAN WARRIOR'S
UNDERSEA DEATH.

ENOUGH FIGHTING
MEN HAVE BEEN LOST TO
THE CAUSE OF FALSE HONOR,
RODUNN. BOTH ABOVE
AND BELOW.

FOR YOU,
MY KING... WERE
EVERYTHING...
THAT I WAS
NOT.

WHAT
THE WORLD NEEDS
NOW IS A WOMAN'S
TOUCH.

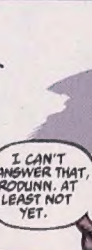


M-MY PAIN IS GONE. MY ENERGY RETURNED. I AM HEALED!

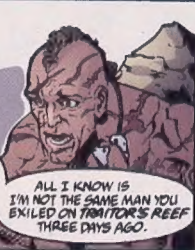
WHAT IS THIS HAND YOU LAY UPON ME?



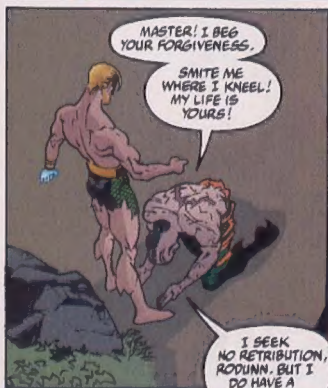
WHAT ARE YOU?



I CAN'T ANSWER THAT, RODUNN. AT LEAST NOT YET.



ALL I KNOW IS I'M NOT THE SAME MAN YOU EXILED ON TRAITOR'S REEF THREE DAYS AGO.



MASTER! I BEG YOUR FORGIVENESS.

SMITE ME WHERE I KNEEL! MY LIFE IS YOURS!

I SEEK NO RETRIBUTION, RODUNN. BUT I DO HAVE A REQUEST.



RETURN TO ATLANTIS. LET MY PEOPLE KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN.

TELL THEM I DO NOT TURN A BLIND EYE TO THE DARKNESS THAT HAS DESCENDED UPON THEM.

AND ONE OTHER THING...



LEND ME THOSE TROUSERS, WOULD YOU?



HEY--
FANCYPANTS?



YOU
AROUND?



BLONDIE? I GOT
THE GUY TO HOSPITAL
IN THE NICK OF TIME.
THEY'RE GIVING HIM
BLOOD. HE'S GOING
TO BE OKAY.

THE DOCTORS
DON'T HAVE A CLUE
WHAT BIT INTO HIM. SO
I CAME BACK TO SEE
IF YOU'RE--

GOOD NEWS!
GOOD NEWS!



AGHH!
WH-WHO
ARE YOU?

I AM THE
MESSENGER!


I CARRY
THE WORD FOR
MY LIEGE!



HE HAS
TOUCHED ME WITH HIS
RESURGENT POWER! FILLED
ME WITH THE VITALITY OF
HIS TRUE ESSENCE!

I WAS
LOST! BROKEN!
BUT HE HAS MADE
ME WHOLE!





YOU'RE
AQUAMAN!

AND JUST
BACK FROM VISITING
OLD ANNWN ITSELF,
I MIGHT ADD.

NINT
**The Sorcerer's
Apprentice!**